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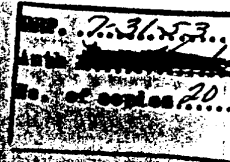
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Soviet Military Intelligence: Two Sketches

Diversionsists of the  
Soviet Army

In addition to the schools of the type described (the Baluberskaya School) the preparation and training of diversionsists was conducted in each Soviet Army by the so-called Intelligence Divisions, which were in contact with the military section of political police, known in its abbreviated form by the name Smersh (Death to spies and diversionsists).

Operationally, the intelligence <sup>section</sup> ~~division~~ of the army was subordinated to the intelligence <sup>section later directorate</sup> ~~division~~ of the army <sup>first</sup> ~~group~~, and the latter was subordinated to the intelligence <sup>directorate</sup> ~~division~~ of the Red Army (later Soviet Army) Staff.

In the training of diversionsists (junior sergeants and soldiers), the latter, as a rule, were attached to the army communications regiment, but were located individually and were subordinate only to the officers of the intelligence division.

#### Living Conditions of Diversionsists in the Army

As members of the intelligence division the scouts obtained a better food allowance than the customary rations issued to army personnel; in addition to meats and fats they received milk, butter, sausages, canned foods, and if available at the warehouse, were given chocolate and, as a rule, vodka.

When departing on their missions they usually received food for a period of 3 to 5 days. This amount of foodstuffs was insufficient and the rest had to be obtained by devious methods -- by thieving, and other techniques of "self-procurement," as these acts were usually referred to by the scouts. We shall describe such a self-procurement procedure as told by sergeant P a reconnaissance scout.

The incident took place in Poland (Posnan). Said P, "I resolved to take a hike to see if I could find something. While walking along a dark street, I noticed a woman approaching from the opposite direction. I flashed my light in her face and

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asked her, "Young lady could you tell me the time." "Certainly," she replied readily, just flash your light on my watch." She raised her hand and peered at the watch -- a splendid gold timepiece. Without further ado, I grabbed her by the arm. The lady tried to shout for help, but I politely warned her not to raise a rumpus, otherwise she might get shot. With this I brandished my pistol. I seized the watch and proceeded to my quarters.

While returning along a footpath which ran parallel to a road I observed a person coming toward me bearing a suitcase. It occurred to me that I might find something in the way of sustenance here. On reaching the stranger I tore the bag from his hand, tossed it in the bushes and jumped after it. The victim remonstrated weakly, and took his heels in the opposite direction, apparently out of sheer fright. I examined the bag. It seems that the suitcase was locked and it was necessary for me to cut it open. To my surprise, the suitcase was chock full of cabbage!. Upon seeing such a "prize" I smiled with great satisfaction.

In Poland and Germany, the scouts, using weapons to back up their threats, took such things as chickens, geese, and everything they needed. They were not punished for this, of course.

Those who lived in the intelligence schools enjoyed a degree of freedom; military discipline was not applied to them. Actually, no one ever brought action against them.

#### Diversionist Scout Cadres

With the exception of the intelligence officers, who, as a rule had completed special intelligence schools, and who worked in the intelligence division as well as in the German rear, the enlisted were selected on the spot. Preference was given to reckless, clever men. In this connection, former homeless individuals as well as those who had committed acts of theft, banditry, and hooliganism were accepted for duty in the intelligence force.

#### Training of Intelligence Personnel in the Army

There are two groups with the intelligence divisions of the army for the training of personnel.

1. The long range reconnaissance group. The task of this group included reconnaissance, espionage and diversion, carried out in the deep rear of the enemy,

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roughly 400 - 600 km from the front lines.

2. The close reconnaissance group. This group operated close to the front in the enemy rear.

The military missions were as follows:

A. Determine the strength of the enemy, the number and description of military units located at a given point.

B. Report instances of regrouping of enemy forces.

C. Report places of greatest concentration of enemy forces.

D. Report where enemy units are coming from and where they are headed, as well as size of enemy forces indicated on a map.

E. Carry out diversionist missions, blow up bridges, railroads, and various installations.

F. Destroy enemy telephone and telegraph lines. Listen in on telephone conversations. For this purpose the intelligence workers had with them a secret radio-telephone called "sokolov," by means of this instrument it was possible to listen in on the enemy conversations without cutting into their lives while at a distance of 5 - 8 km away from them.

Instruction on these points was given by the officers of army intelligence.

Intelligence personnel studied the following disciplines in connection with the special division known as "smersh";

- a. Espionage in the enemy rear;
- b. Self defence;
- c. arresting
- d. work among the populace in occupied territory;

The intelligence workers of this unit upon being dropped in the enemy rear were supposed to organize partisan detachment in a definite area and carefully not the needs of the people; they were authorized to kill these individuals who were suspected of sympathizing with the enemy. At any rate they were supposed to report such cases to the intelligence division of the army and to smersh, or place them under surveillance until the arrival of the MGB-MVD authorities.

During the war years they were authorized to kill such people in Germany.

The intelligence workers was authorized to start anti-Soviet conversation with

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the idea of finding out how discerning the mood of the individual with whom he was conversing. Finally, they were authorized to start various rumors with the object of rousing hatred for the enemy.

How was all this done in practice? An officer of the intelligence division writes as follows: when we were advancing from Krasnyi Bog, a group of our intelligence workers was dropped across the Bug River. They were dressed in old shoes and torn clothing, armed with pistols, and equipped with radio sets. Flown across the lines in US aircraft at night they were dropped by parachute. We established contact with them on the following day. They transmitted to us all details, such as who was working for the enemy, where such individuals resided, and the nature of their occupation. They wandered about the countryside as passers-by who appeared to be on their way to work, or merely going home. As the Germans retreated they retreated with them and continued to report by means of their radio such information as the identity and full description of persons in the villages or cities who were working with the Germans, with the Gestapo, the police, or with the village mayors. After we crossed the Bug River our MVD began its investigations at the stations of Antonovka and Alpolonovka. The person who was guilty of major offenses was shot on the spot, or sent to the rear to Siberia. As far as the lesser criminals such as village mayor and the police were concerned the people were informed that a military court would be held in the square. Six persons were brought to that point. After a short period of interrogation they were sentenced. The penalty was death by hanging. The guilty were hung to an overhead beam. To each person's chest there was attached a wooden panel bearing the inscription "traitor"; it was decreed that the corpses should not be removed for five days. This picture was repeated from Odessa to Poland. In Germany proper the soldiers themselves shot and hanged whomever they pleased. Such actions were made possible by the Soviet type of propaganda and the fiery slogans used by Ilya Ehrenberg such as: "Papa kill a German."

Provocations Committed by Army Intelligence Personnel Among  
Populace of Enemy Occupied Territory

Ordinarily, the army intelligence personnel, dressed in civilian clothing, started vicious rumors in the German rear regarding the savage treatment of civilians by the German military. How was this done?

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Upon reaching a certain village, they would say for example that they had witnessed the mass trial of civilians in a certain city and that the entire area in which the village was located would have to send its people to Germany for enforced labor. At this point they would read a letter specially prepared by SMERSH; this letter was allegedly written by certain "relatives" who were in Germany. The "kin" in stated their letter that they were subjected to beatings and caused to suffer greatly in Germany, and that numerous of their friends were dying from starvation. The letters usually ended with the urgent plea not to surrender to the Germans, to join the partisans, and to take up the defense.

Following such a rumor, the residents of one particular village rose up and killed the village mayor who had been appointed to his post by the Germans. In other places the people joined the Partisans or adopted other means of resistance.

#### Communications -- Ciphers -- Code

Army intelligence had special radio sets for purposes of communications; these were the "Sever" and "Partizanka" types.

In the event of the operations were a great distance away use was made of the RB and RRM radio sets with spare alkaline storage batteries of the 2-NKN type or dry cell anode batteries of the BAG-60 type.

If it was impossible to establish contact by means of radio, special liaison men were used.

As a rule, the intelligence workers encoded their transmissions. This code was somewhat like the following: 95645, 5348.72, 3123, 91119, 328, etc., and the signature of Ivanov; this meant that the arrangements had been made and were known to the intelligence division. Communications were maintained on a set wavelength. The call sign was usually the name of some river. All intelligence workers had their particular recognition terms such as "the blind one," the "deaf one," etc.

#### Clothing Worn by Diversionsists

Army intelligence personnel were attired in very poor civilian garb, of the type worn by the local populace. The intelligence division provided them with the necessary documents and certificates, such as those received upon discharge from a Gulag prison camp, as well as other documents indicating that the bearer was an

avid idealist with anti-Soviet leanings.

As a rule, the intelligence personnel of the army were held in high esteem; they had many privileges.

It is sufficient to state that for each such raid in the enemy rear the diversionists, of both army and division intelligence, were given the military order of the Red Banner.

As can be seen from the foregoing, the Soviet government placed great importance on the work of the spies and diversionists.

#### The Belogerezhskaya School

#### Description of Diversionist Activities During World War II

#### How I Came to Enter the School

At the beginning of World War II, I was attending a Komsomol school in the City of Kursk. I recall the spirit of alarm with which the first days of the war were reported to us.

It was not until Stalin gave his radio address on the third of July 1941 and large numbers of refugees began to arrive in Kursk that we learned about the catastrophic events which were taking place on the western front. We placed all our hopes on the statement by K. Voroshilov that "we shall strike back at the enemy with triple blows." The rapid movement by the enemy was not even checked by our system of permanent strongpoints (reinforced pillboxes and earth and timber pillboxes) constructed along the length of the Soviet-Polish boundary line (1939) especially for this purpose.

Naturally, all this created a tremendous amount of confusion and alarm.

Finally, on 5 or 7 July 1941, it was announced that the Komsomol School was to closed.

During the meeting when this announcement was made there appeared, in addition to the Komsomol members, a number of political representatives from headquarters (Communists) and a political department deputy from a certain rifle division.

After discussing Stalin's speech the chairman of the assembly made the following announcement: "Comrades, the official portion of today's meeting is closed. I request that Komsomol members from the Ukraine and Belorussia remain after the others have departed."

We all stayed behind. With us there was a young man who was the son of officer Khizov, a commissar in a rifle division.

After everything quieted down a representative of the political section of the division, who was a major by rank, made the following announcement: "Comrades, there is no sense in dodging the issue, our native land is in very great difficulties. In his speech of July 3 Comrade Stalin gave us the following concrete assignment: organize partisan detachments in the enemy rear; disrupt his communication, transportation, supply, and roads, kill the enemy and his collaborators wherever they may be found. It is only by this means that we can lessen the tremendous burdens of our army; we will give the high command an opportunity to call up fresh reserves. In order to put into practice the above missions set forth by the party and the government, as well as carry out the instructions put forth by Stalin on the occasion of his speech, the party and Komsomol organization of our military district has decided to entrust in your charge the task of organizing diversionist and partisan activities in the enemy rear.

All necessary instructions and assistants will be given to you. At this point you must tell us one thing: do you agree to carry out in a creditable manner this trust placed in you by the party of the government?"

I must admit that neither I nor any of the cadets had any idea how this task assigned by the party and the government was to be carried out. The fact that I was going to be a diversionist -- a sort of Soviet Lawrence -- that I should work along, or with small groups, spin webs of espionage, carry out diversionists activities and make secret agreements -- all this never occurred to me. Nevertheless, I joined the others in agreeing to carry out the mission with honor. Upon this the meeting ended.

On the following day we began to organize our affairs. There was a check of our personal histories; they registered our addresses, our family connections, their occupation, their party affiliations, etc. Once again they checked our personal affairs.

This paper work took two days. On the third day they proposed that we surrender our military accoutrements at the warehouse. In place of it they issued civilian clothing consisting of dark trousers, warm jackets, and caps. They gave



us provisions for the road, the so-called emergency rations sufficient for three days. Under the leadership of a division commander they directed us to the station where we were to entrain. At the station we were met by another group, consisting of some 35 - 38 men, clothed like we were. Eventually we learned that this group consisted of civilians mobilized for the Komsomol-partisan school. There was a total of 150 men. We boarded a freight car and our train left Kurak for Bryansk. We passed through Bryansk and upon reaching a point 17 kilometers east of the city we were ordered to detrain.

It proved to be the small station "Belye Beruga."

We moved along a narrow country road in broken formation into the depths of a forest. We marched thus for about 8 km. Quite unexpectedly we arrived at monastery, an ancient Russian structure having very high brick walls. The forest was very dense. Some of the younger ones attempted humorous remarks, but all joking was quickly discouraged.

The war, all that awaited us in the future, the civilian jackets we wore instead of military uniform, and finally the dense forest and the ancient monastery in it -- all these things caused even the most frivolous of the cadets to be preoccupied in thought. Upon approaching the building we noticed that there was a security guard around it, but all the personnel were civilian attire like ours. To be sure, in some cases regulation military pullover tunics were visible underneath the jackets as well as rank insignia -- junior lieutenants, and captains. They were literally armed to the teeth. Most of them had submachine guns, and numerous pistols were in evidence. Judging from the service insignia it appeared that the guards were from the USSR border troops.

The director of our group showed some kind of a document and then entered the monastery. We were ordered to remain at the enclosure in the goods. We waited for quite a long time. One of the cadets tried to learn the identity of this monastery and what we were to do in it. The first of these curious cadets returned embarrassed. The guards warned him to go back to his original position and keep his tongue behind his teeth. We were completely disappointed and proceeded to eat our emergency rations. None of us had any idea that we would get a meal at this new place; but three hours later a splendid meal was served to us (we had never had anything like

it in school.) A large quantity of straw was also delivered. The director finally came and announced that we would sleep under the open skies that night. We were to be admitted into the monastery on the following morning. Someone informed him that we had nibbled on our emergency rations because we had not expected a dinner. The director merely laughed. I thought to myself that I was in a very strange place. Regardless of how much thinking I did about the whole situation I could not find a rational answer. I became wearied and fell into a deep sleep.

In the Beloberezhskoi Monastery

On the following morning we were admitted into the monastery and I began to learn about local conditions. The monastery contained two churches, which had been converted into warehouses, and a number of other buildings. In addition to us buildings housed our teachers and directors as well as the guards. Quite isolated from all the others there was still another group in this monastery.

We were then given the following information: a. all army regulations relating to conduct toward senior officers and teachers would be changed at the monastery. Henceforth, we were to be civilians and were to drop all army customs and habits; b. We were not authorized to leave the monastery without our director;

c. We were to forget all that we saw and heard here;

d. they suggested that we select our own friends and buddies with whom we desired to study and work; the groups were to be between three and seven men.

e. instruction in the school was to be given to groups of 20 men each.

f. lists of men selected to work together in the German rear were supposed to be presented to the authorized representative of the military council, Comrade Karkov. Incidentally, this was the only name <sup>of</sup> pseudonym which was officially made known to us.

Finally, they announced the schedule of the day to us;

breakfast -- 0800 - 0900

class exercises -- 0900 - 1100

class exercises -- 1100 - 1230

dinner -- 1230 - 1400

class exercises -- 1400 - 1600

The first day at the monastery was designated as a day of rest.

Living Conditions

Living conditions at the school for the cadets were very good. For the most part we were quartered with our own friends. Our food, which was issued three times a day, was considered excellent. We received butter, cheese, sausage, vegetables, -- all these items were issued without restriction and in abundance.

As a rule, we had two courses--dinner with meat. Vodka was issued in small amounts only. During a period of over two months I, like the others, received vodka only five times.

With the exception of the classroom exercises which we had to attend the rest of the time entirely our own. We could sleep, smoke, play checkers or chess, or indulge in sports. No one interfered with our activities, on the contrary, they were anxious to keep us satisfied. It should not be forgotten that during these days the civilian populace and military personnel in the rear and the front were suffering tremendous privations and undergoing great sacrifice.

Just what did they teach us in the school?

Demolition Procedures

It is correct to say that greatest stress in this school was placed on demolition procedures.

The director of our group, judging from the rank insignia on his tunic, was a captain of the border troops. He taught us how to distinguish between the different kinds of explosives, various kinds of mines, how to make an explosive mixture of tel and dynamite, how to bundle grenades and pyrexiline demolition charges. A great deal of stress was placed on the field methods of making demolition caps, and how to make grenades and mines.

Finally, a great deal of attention was devoted to the camouflaging of mines, demolition procedures, and calculations regarding the quantity of explosive material necessary to blow up a given installation, bridge, railroad, highway, train, water reservoirs, etc.

They taught us how to set lever mines and how to use the Colonel Starinov type mines and contact mines.

They taught us how to determine the height of the fuse contact placed under railroads. To do this it was necessary for us to know the amount of deflection of

the railroad tracks when the train moved over them. As we later learned this knowledge was of very great importance to the diversionists later on. The Germans soon learned how dangerous an element the diversionists were with respect to the railroads. They destroyed locomotives, personnel, and all kinds of important materiel necessary for the front, such as fuel and an uniton. In addition to protecting the railroads by means of special units, and clearing the forest on either side of the tract for a distance of 150 - 200 meters and constructing concrete strongpoints, they finally reached the point where they had to resort to severe repressions against peoples residing in areas adjacent to points where trains had been blown up. They finally learned to send empty cars in front of the train; later, the trains were preceded by flat cars loaded with sand.

This is where the diversionists found their school training to be of great value. Many of us were capable of determining the degree of deflection of the rail depending on whether the cars were loaded with sand, or travelling empty. We were able to set the contacts of detonators in such a manner that the explosion would take place the instant the heavy locomotive reached the mined area. Having attained this degree of expertness it was impossible for the Germans to adopt foolproof safeguards. For example, both the native residents and German soldiers who travelled the railroad between Vilna and Minsk in 1943 - 1944 could see scores of crippled and demolished trains along the tracks which German railroad authorities were unable to clear away.

Our training in demolition work was very detailed and covered an extensive period. To be sure, while studying demolition work we did not blow up any trains, but oak and birch trees served the purpose equally as well. In such procedures it was inevitable that some were hurt. Two cadets were wounded because they did not take cover in time from an explosion. We felt that even though explosives were very critical materials, especially at the beginning of the war, the authorities did not spare any of it for our use.

#### Special Exercises

The man who instructed us in special disciplines bore no special marks of distinction, but we felt that some of the communists who joined us at Kurak treated him with great deference. Amongst ~~the~~ themselves they spoke of him as a person

of high authority in the NKVD with the rank of major in the Federal security.

The lectures he gave us can be divided into three general headings: 1. activities of diversionists; 2. espionage; and 3. diversion.

In regard to the first point our instructor warned us that great difficulties and dangers confronted us. He advised us never to trust anything or anybody without a thorough and careful preliminary study or investigation. He said that any error we might commit could cost our life. He continued that we should avoid fraternizing with women, drinking alcohol in beverages, or if indulging in liquor we should bear in mind that we were surrounded by enemies who would try to get us drunk in the hopes of hearing one carelessly uttered word. In such cases we were to do the same thing to our conversationist; we were instructed to have possession of ourselves and to keep our heads.

They told us that we could use our own or adopt fictitious names. We were to inform them about our choice beforehand, and they would prepare the necessary documents credentials in advance.

We were forbidden to fraternize with rank and file partisans. No one, with the exception of certain specially-designated persons who knew the pass word and call sign, was authorized to speak about the nature of our work. We were informed that each group would have its own number and that only the members of a particular group and special liaison agent would know of that particular number.

In military espionage work we would have to determine the location and amount of enemy troops, air and supply bases. We were to report all large scale enemy troop movements and the movement of trains. We were taught about the markings used by the different combat elements of Hitler's army, SS units, the police as well as the army ranks, conventional signs, etc.

#### Activities Among Civilians

We were authorized to carry on anti-Soviet conversations with the object of determining the views of the enemy.

1. We were to attempt to arouse hatred for the enemy.
2. We were to expose and report all enemies to the Soviet authorities.
3. We were to destroy those who were engaged in working for the enemy.

In the event of the slightest danger of exposure and arrest we were supposed to take to the woods and join the partisans.

In the event that it became necessary for us to cross over to the Soviet side and if we ran into Soviet patrols we were to demand that we be sent to the nearest military headquarters. There, we would call Senior Lieutenant Tishchenko or Lt. Litvinenko of the Bielorussian Army Group headquarters.

When we departed, he assigned our group number, told us the address to be used in communications, as well as the passwords and conversational code words to be used by the men of our group and by the liaison agents.

Political Work in the German Rear

We knew the teacher of this discipline as the third secretary of the Central Committee of the communist party. He was a man of about 50 with grey hair at the temples. He spoke beautiful Bielorussian. He was strangely dressed: jacket, trousers, boots with foot clouts, and an old overcoat on top of everything.

Briefly stated his lectures boiled down to the following:

- a. make a systematic study of the moods of the people found in German-occupied territory;
- b. strive to prevent the enemy from receiving any support whatever among the people;
- c. do everything possible to promote the growth of the partisan movement in the rear;
- d. and finally the most important thing, our work was to be carried out in accordance with the spirit of Comrade Stalin's July speech, namely, to destroy the enemy and his accomplices wherever possible.

We were authorized to use all the methods of provocation and denunciations as well as homicide and diversion if by so doing we could hurt the enemy or his allies.

Diversions were advised to join the German Police service, serve as translators and interpreters, as burgomeisters, and as clergymen. The latter service was especially recommended for persons with experience as stage actors and good voices. In this connection I later became acquainted with two diversionists in Ryasa, Bielorussia.

We were authorized to use very strong measures against that element of the

population who continued to support the Germans in spite of our warnings. We could set mines in the village; we could shoot down some of the enemy with the object of stimulating the Germans to invoke severe repressive measures against the residents of that village, etc. Some of our cadets suggested that by taking such action, many innocent men, women, and children would die in the process. Looking at that particular student with cold searching eyes the instructor said: "Comrade, no sacrifice is too great for our native land."

In concluding this section about training I should like to mention that during the entire time we were there we never learned the official name of the "institution." We did not even know the names of the school officials with the exception of our own teachers. We referred to it as the School for Diversi-onists and Spies at the Central Sector of the Belorussian Front.

We knew that at the end of our period of training the Bryansk group of divers-i-onists, consisting of seventeen men, arrived; in the main, they consisted of young folks more than half of them being women.

As I previously pointed out there was still another group in our school which was housed separately. The people of this group took occasional trips in three-ton trucks and were armed with rifles and submachine guns. Each man carried a pistol. For some reason they were given vodka both before they departed for "work" and upon return. They never spoke about their work, but we were quite convinced that these people were engaged in shooting prisoners.

In conclusion, I wish to add that very few of the divers-i-onists who followed us had as prolonged a period of training. As a rule, the subsequent training of such individuals lasted from 3 days to 1 month after which they were dropped into the enemy rear for duty.

#### End of Training Period

The front was rapidly moving toward the east. They told us that the battle for Pochep was beginning. A new group of cadets, consisting of some three hundred men, arrived. At the end of September 1941 we were photographed, both profile and face views. We were given the encoded name and number of our divers-i-onist group, which consisted of three men. Once again they checked our personal history. Some were issued new sweaters and padded trousers. They gave me a blue outfit, the uniform

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of a Soviet railroad worker. Once again the third secretary of the Central Committee of Bielorrussia interrogated us for a prolonged period of time as he issued our passports and various documents. Finally, he posed the following question: "Now you won't betray us will you comrades?" I must admit that I had no such ideas at the time. Satisfied with my reply, he shook my hand and wished me every success in the accomplishment of my honorable mission. Upon our departure they gave us bags for carrying our things (these were similar to the sea bags carried by sailors) a pistol with 21 cartridges, two packages of explosives, 3 fragmentation type grenades, a supply of food for ten days, medical supplies, and a bottle of water. After a grand feast with appropriate drinks our party finally moved to Bryansk in 3-ton trucks under the direction of Karpov, the authorized representative of the military council.

#### An Incident Along the Road

We had not covered half the distance when a strange 12-ton truck began to overtake us; it contained several Soviet officers, 3 soldiers, and one woman. Upon approaching our vehicle, the last in the column (Karpov was riding in it), the driver of the overtaking machine began signalling violently for us to clear the road and allow him to pass. Our driver ignored this, but the vehicle eventually overtook us at a convenient spot along the road and the personnel shouted vile epithets and threats against us. As though that was not enough the truck stopped, and blocked the road. An officer with drawn pistol emerged from the vehicle and thrust himself upon the driver. The situation was tense. We watched the scene with great excitement. We assumed that the passing officer took us to be a group of workers. How dare these dirty ragamuffins block the road to officers; they were a little tipsy. Several men jumped from our truck seizing submachine guns which were being shipped to the partisans at Bryansk and surrounded the officer. This bold act dismayed him. Karpov, who listened to the officers vile language in silence, presented himself to the embarrassed officer as an authorized agent of the military council of the front and demanded that the officer produce his identification card. We could hardly contain our laughter as we looked at this officer who was in such an embarrassing plight. Karpov demanded: "Where are you going in such a hurry? Who authorized you to block the highway to traffic? Do you know who these people are?"



Do you know the nature of their mission? Do you understand that I am dutybound to shoot you down on the spot for this incident?" The poor lieutenant was extremely dejected.

"Get into my truck," ordered Karpov. The lieutenant begged forgiveness and pleaded that he was on an urgent mission. Karpov then allowed him to get into his own truck and proceed behind no less than one kilometer. The over-joyed officer saluted; his machine kept well to the rear. We laughed for a long time afterward as we thought of the officer and his lack of common sense.

#### In the Enemy Rear

Karpov returned accompanied by 2 border troopers. Using infrequently travelled roads we moved off in the general direction of the front. We selected the crossing point of the boundary with very great care. We travelled for a long time. We stopped in the forest, which was bordered by thick undergrowth extending for many kilometers along the front. We broke up into two groups. The first consisted of 90 men and the second of 60; I and my friends were members of the second group -- the leader in charge was the Secretary of the Brest-Litovsk Defense Committee of the Belorussian Communist Party, named Bondarev. We hardly had time to make note of our new surroundings before Karpov and the troops which accompanied us had turned around and drove back in the trucks. The Germans kept up sporadic small arms and artillery fire, but did not attack that day or the next. During the night the first group decided to move across the front line. It was necessary to go about 5 kilometers through terrain which was relatively open to the forests of Bryansk in the distance. The Germans were very suspicious of the thick undergrowth as they dispatched numerous mounted scouts there. The Germans travelled around in their motorcycles occasionally muffling the motors, listening very carefully, and then departing. At about midnight they ceased coming altogether. The first group made its way across the front without making any sound. It was forbidden to smoke, cough, or make any commotion. The night was cold, there was lots of rattle on the ground, the terrain was very muddy. Our feet were thoroughly soaked. Because we were not able to smoke or even light a match we were quite nervous by morning. Someone started the rumor that the Germans had surrounded the bushes through which we were moving. Panic seized us; the effect was just like a spark tossed into a

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barrel of powder. Many of us left behind our sea bags, mines, grenades, and took to our heels; our faces were thoroughly scratched and our clothing torn. It is difficult to say how long the panic lasted. Since we were very tired physically and didn't know exactly where to go the panic soon ended. It ended just as it had started -- very suddenly. When we attempted to identify the guilty culprit who had started the rumor we could not find him. One person had said one thing another something different, while a third had added still more to what had been previously said. In our attempt to find the one responsible for the panic we became completely confused and gave up the investigation. The worst thing about it is that this panic resulted in the loss of sea bags and provisions, in addition to the loss of our mines and grenades (a diversivist by name of Gorelov disappeared somewhere). Approximately half of us were without food. We had reason to be alarmed. In addition to the difficulties of crossing of the boundary we were now without food.

Our group crossed the boundary on the following night. There was work for us immediately after we crossed the front line. While we were moving along we cut off sections of enemy telephone wires and disseminated anti-Fascist leaflets with which the school had so thoughtfully provided us. In the forest we met the group of 90 men which had departed before us and continued our movement together with them. We travelled at night exercising great caution; the making of fires was not permitted during halts. On the third the scouts informed us that an unknown group was trailing us. It was later established that these people were also scouts and had been sent out to observe us; they consisted of a group of soldiers and officers of the Red Army who had been cut off by the enemy. When we established contact with them I noticed that they had two light M-1 vehicles. The captain of this attachment told us that on the third of October the Germans had occupied the City of Pochep; he gave us instructions as to the best method for moving ahead. On the fourth day we found a dead person dressed as a peasant. Our supplies were beginning to run out and we were forced to subsist on fish which we obtained by destruction with hand grenades. On 5 October we reached the edge of the forest. We saw a village in the offing. We saw a well-to-do man dressed in sheepskin coat and tried to attract the attention of this elderly fellow but failed; he succeeded in concealing

himself in extreme haste and we could not find him despite a thorough search. We decided to by-pass the village. We had to cross a river which though only 7 - 8 meters wide, was quite deep. It was the first time in my life that I had ever crossed a river with the aid of hay. Each of us heaped hay around his legs and moved forward. Although we were soaked we nevertheless got to the other side.

Six October. No one had any food left. We decided to wait for darkness while concealed in the bushes. One of our group, encouraged by hunger, volunteered to go into the village to ask for something to eat. In two hours he returned quite unharmed stating that the women had given him all he could eat. They gave him food for the trip and warned him against falling into the hands of the partisans -- deserters were executed according to them.

7 October. The Mogilev group departed. During the night our scouts contacted a small group of partisans. They informed us of the best manner of getting to the enemy rear. We were suffering from the effects of hunger.

8 October. Our group decided to separate from the others. It was necessary for us to bury our weapons, ammunition and destroy all compromising documents. We openly passed through the village of Silulevichi 10 kilometers from the city of Klintay. We entered the home of an old man in the village of Lopatki; the old lady brought us bread, some boiled potatoes, and served milk. I exchanged my boots there for basque shoes. My feet hurt pretty bad after 8 days. I couldn't travel in boots any farther -- my corns were killing me. I began thinking that even our clothing may excite suspicion. The question would arise as to where could deserters from the Red Army, as we called ourselves, find new uniforms of the railway service as well as new sea bags.

I inwardly cursed our school officials for such a blunder and we began to exchange our clothing for simple peasant garb. We even exchanged our sea bags.

9 October. Our entire group was held up by the police in the village of Ushcherpe. We were carefully searched and my friends, who went through without any hitch, were released. They found on my person a booklet containing a sheet of paper with the heading "Fascism is the worst enemy of mankind." I stayed under arrest for a whole day, but I finally convinced the chief of police. Fortunately for me the court investigating officials were not available and I was released.

10 October. I stopped in a village where I had a meal and slept like a human being for the first time.

11 October. I stopped with the village mayor.

12 October. I reached the Dneiper River. An old man transported me in a peasant cart to the village of M-Sloboda of the Streshenski Raion, of Poleskii Oblast.

13 October. I reached the village of Krapivno. The village mayor, a former deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Belorussian Socialist Soviet Republic, wore a decoration. He received me in a very fine manner. I spent the night there and received some provisions for the road.

14 October. I reached my native country side. The period of the passage through the front line area was ended. However, the most difficult thing of all --- the work of a diversionist in the German Rear was still waiting for me.

Work of the MGB and SMERSH in the Soviet Army

Citizens of the free world and serious students of jurisprudence will search long though without success for any evidence of fixed standards and legal bases by which the judicial body of the NKVD-MGB guides itself in the punishment of people. They may search everywhere but will find nothing quite like it in the free world; they will be awed by the following fact.

To be sure, citizens of the "happiest" country have ceased to wonder about this. From the most humble state farm worker to the highest marshal they all know that each citizen in the "land of freedom" is a prisoner of the MVD-MGB.

In the following, we shall demonstrate how the secret police operates in the Soviet Army.

Special Division of the Aviation Brigade Attached to the NKVD  
in the City of Vitebsk

The 1937 mass arrests, exiles, and death before the rifle squad of "enemies of the people," spies and diversionists in the Vitebsk Oblast devolved upon the Chief of the Oblast NKVD, Junior Lieutenant of the Federal Security Division Gorbalenya, and the Chief of the Special Section of the Aviation Brigade, Junior Lieutenant of the MGB, A-reichik.

Anyone who had the "fortune" to know these two men, especially Gorbalenya, a

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semi-ignorant, cruel man as well as a dipsomaniac and poltroon whom the Soviet government had rewarded for good work with the order of the Red Star, knew that the campaign of arresting and shooting the "enemies of the people," "diversionists," and "spies" was purely a propaganda trick. Everyone knew that it was a mere question of carrying out secret directives.

The following was told to me by an investigator of this division, a person who was a victim of these "organs" but who was able to preserve at least some decency. Please believe me I don't know what to do. Judge the thing for yourself. I was assigned the task of working up a case concerning a professor of an institute. According to reports, he was alleged to have perverted the basic principles of Marxism and Leninism, and so on. I summoned him to appear for an interrogation. But when I began to talk things over you can imagine how embarrassed I was. He quoted Marx and Lenin each time I said something to him; he asked me where I found the statements I made and asked me to tell him what page they were to be found on. I told my chief about this man but his advice was not very helpful. He said, "Do as you please, but this man must not be allowed to be at liberty." What was I to do. As you know, I have a wife and two children myself."

I wish to repeat that these ~~unpleasant~~ words were uttered by a man who was an investigator for the NKVD.

As a result, during the 1933 - purges not less than 10-12 thousand "spies," "diversionists," and enemies of the people were exiled or jailed in the Vitebsk Prison. All the prominent people fell into this category, from the highest to the lowest - from the Secretary of the Defense Committee, Zhuravel; the chairman of the City Soviet, Averin; the only person in Bielorrussia who had won four orders of the Red Banner, Shubin; down to the very keeper of the law, the prosecuting attorney of the City of Vitebsk.

Just how did the special division of the (aviabrigada) an Aviation brigade and its chief Ageichik operate? I shall cite two characteristic examples. During the month of May, 1937 the special division of the aviation brigade arrested a chauffeur Zubarev and a mechanic, Zheleznev from the UVSr 98. The case came up before investigator Ryabchinsky, a typical well-fed, soulless chekist. Knowing that Zubarov had

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been a rather illiterate farm worker in the past while the mechanic Zheznov was absolutely disinterested in politics, and, being from Leningrad did not know the heroes of Belorussia. Ryabchinsky drew up an utterly fantastic case linking the names of the two men with that of Uborevich, the Commander of the Belorussian Special Military District; he cited a number of other no less fantastic crimes allegedly committed by the accused. As though this were not enough he collected a lot of damaging evidence which supported this brazen lie and proceeded with the task of working up a case against these "diversionists" and enemies of the people." The case against Zubarev ended after the first interrogation session. He was vilified, struck in the nape of the neck, several times, and, after the first confrontation, agreed to sign a confession.

Quite unexpectedly Ryabchinski encountered an unusually stubborn fellow in Zheleznev. Nothing could get him to confess -- neither beatings, unrelenting interrogations, nor an investigation which lasted 10½ months. The strong mechanic not only refused to sign the confession drawn up by Ryabchinsky, but he even went so far as to make accusations; he did not hesitate to tell his persecutor what he thought about the case he had drawn. The stubborn mechanic was severely beaten; he was forced to wash his bleeding body under a faucet. For refusing to do so he was again beaten, and returned to prison for further questioning.

In the prison Zheleznev said: "Who is this Uborevich? They are beating me for having had contact with this man; my persecutor does not even want to tell me who he is." Many of the prison personnel admired the mechanic for his tenacity, and for that reason, as though by secret agreement, they did not reveal any information.

#### The Case of Air Brigade Commander Ya. Smushkevich

In the early part of May 1937 the tireless Ageichik resolved to get rid of still another "enemy of the people" -- the commander of the Vitebsk Aviation Brigade, Ya. Smushkevich.

Dark-haired, medium of build, solid in appearance, and conservative in his outlook on life -- these are the characteristics of one of the best fighter pilots. Ya. Smushkevich, twice hero of the Soviet Union prior to World War II, and thrice Hero of the Soviet Union since the late war.

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As commander of the aviation brigade Smushkevich had occasion to meet Commander Uborevich. This in itself was enough for the wiley Ageichik. Immediately he went to work on the case. Pretty soon witnesses were found, for many people were just envious of him. Gossip was circulated, plots were woven, and the intrigue was complete. Ultimately, a case was built around Smushkevich and he was called to Moscow, quite an unexpected surprise to him. This fact made it possible, to complete the settings for the plot to expose a new "enemy of the people" and assign the roles to the ~~known~~ actors.

On the first day following the arrival of the brigade commander from Moscow a secret meeting of the party was called. The fate of the commander was decided beforehand. The presence of Ageichik and his retinue left no doubt about that aspect.

The meeting commenced with a general report. The noisy objections of the air personnel in connection with the mass arrests were suppressed. Many of them dividing the fate of the brigade commander and feeling sorry for him, awaited being exposed themselves with fear and trepidation. The first point of discussion ended without confusion and the chairman was prepared to take up the second point on the agenda. At this point however, the commander asked permission to make an announcement. Everyone was excited.

The brigade commander said: "Comrades, circumstances compel me to report to you the following facts. While in Moscow, I called on Comrade Stalin and the People's Commissar of National Defense, Comrade Voroshilov. While there, I got a new assignment; I was appointed commander of the B.O.V.O. Air Corps. I must now depart and leave you. I trust that our military collective, having achieved outstanding performance in the air force, will continue to be the best unit in the Soviet Army. The order of the People's Commissar of Defense will be announced to all personnel of our aviation brigade.

The meeting broke up with a thunderous ~~applause~~ applause; some clapped their hands out of sheer joy because the illustrious flier had been able to elude the trap set by special section of the NKVD-MGB. There were those who applauded malevolently, fully enjoying the disappointed look on the faces of the special section members and the party leaders.

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And what about the latter? After such an unexpected bit of news they were shocked for/while. When they recovered, they attempted weak smiles on the taut faces; then, they too, began to applaud.

But no one knows today where Ya. Smushkevich, thrice Hero of the Soviet Union and commander of an air corps is to be found today.

#### SMERSH in Action

The numbers of special divisions of the MGB which were converted to SMERSH (Death to spies) in 1942 was not decreased, but on the contrary, further increased; they expanded activities during the war and in the post war years. Just how this took place will be told on the basis of statements by witnesses.

1943 was the climax of the war. Replacements for the army were absorbed from areas retaken from the Germans. After being wounded I found myself with a reserve regiment of the well known Gorokhovetski camps. Thousands of personnel were being prepared for the front here. Most of the young men had fathers who had already lost their lives in the war with the German Nazis. They were undergoing a three-month course of training in how to use the rifle, and had marksmanship as well as drill and political education (the latter d~~ea~~lthwith praise for the socialist fatherland and the Great Stalin). But I shall tell you how they prepared us to receive these people. Two weeks before the arrival of the replacements they informed me that some people would arrive from areas which had formerly been under enemy occupation. They told us that the most important element, as far as we were concerned, was vigilance and awareness. We were instructed to bear in mind that among the newcomers there would be traitors, quizlings and spies working for the good of the Nazis. But this is not all. Many of us were called out individually -- this was true of my case -- to the special division headquarters where we were forced, whether we liked it or not, to act as agents. That is to say we had to agree that such duty was the responsibility of each sincere citizen to his native land and Comrad Stalin. Each person selected a fictitious name for himself and was supposed to report all that he heard. I was given instructions on two different occasions. They taught us how to listen on conversations and the use of various means to begin discussions about the Germans making it appear as though one were interested in their activities during the time



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of occupation. I was to determine who said what, and most of all, I was to report facts about specific individuals. I was supposed to check once a week with the special section of SMERSH and report the progress of my work.

I don't know how many such informants there were, but I believe that practically all the personnel of the Gorkhovetski camps were involved; this included the officers and junior commanders engaged in drilling the recruits. It was a situation that you couldn't satisfy Stalin -- that they would soon send you to the front lines and none of us wanted to die.

Some of the suspected recruits were dispatched to parts unknown, and the other group were organized into march columns and soon directed to the front in accordance with a special order. The guiding principle was simple: "If they're not killed at the front they certainly won't escape us. We have been searching for turn-coats all of our lives; we will get anybody we want," said a drunken lieutenant of SMERSH.

I was ordered to go to the front after two months since I was deemed useless as an informer.

In passing, I might say that the lieutenant of the SMERSH organization hardly succeeded in catching all the spies as he promised -- he was killed in 1946 during the drought and famine in the Ukraine.

A lieutenant colonel of the Soviet Army had the following to say:

"Despite the difficult battles we were waging with the Germans at Pskov and Chudskoe Lake my division received new replacements of 700 men. The SMERSH organization did not lessen, but actually intensified its activities at the front as the Soviet Army approached Berlin.

Each day 25 or 30 men were brought directly out of the trenches to the SMERSH section of my division. They quickly made up the cases concerning these people. A military tribunal, as a rule consisting of 8 to 10 men, collectively passed judgment on such cases. One of the standard sentences was the firing squad. The commandant of SMERSH, a captain B.... executed the sentences. During the two months that I served with the division 280 men were shot."

The fate of those who had won awards or decorations of one kind or another was no different.

In the case of one division a party candidate, a 29-year old lieutenant of the tank forces, who was the holder of a national award, was summoned up for interrogation. The only crime that this tank trooper had committed was the fact that while in the Crimea during the early part of the war, this tank trooper after being wounded and surrounded by the Germans took three or four months to return to the Soviet side. The tank trooper succeeded in forgetting his "crime" in the succeeding years. Later, for valor and heroism displayed in the war against the Nazis he was awarded the Order of the Red Banner and the Order of the Great Patriotic War, First Degree, by General of the army, Petrov.

The tank trooper related the following:

"I reported to SMERSH headquarters to Lieutenant Bronepolsky bearing my decorations and side arms. I had no idea why I was summoned. Upon being ordered to surrender my weapons I complied directly. I noticed that Lieutenant Bronepolsky was coming toward me; he then pulled the decoration off my chest forcibly tearing a hole in my tunic. He threw the decoration in the corner. "Lieutenant," I said to him, "by what authority do you have to remove the decoration which was given to me by the Soviet Government?" He replied, "You, a traitor to your native land, dare to ask me for reasons. Orderly, lead this man away." The subsequent suffering, hunger, and beatings suffered by the heroic tank trooper are too long a story to be told.

But he was lucky. It seems that his case came before the attention of the senior head of SMERSH, who was a close friend of his brother. This alone saved him. It was decided to discharge the tank trooper from the army.

In this same tank division there was a captain in the tank forces who shot himself after he was discharged from the army and learned about the fate of his native land, i.e., Ossetia. On the day before his death this captain had been nominated to the rank of major; he had also received his tenth award for heroism and extraordinary military achievements.

SMERSH did not even forget the Heroes of the Soviet Union. For his combat performance and for exhibiting great heroism during the war a pilot by the name of Malik (a member of the 128th Order of Suvarov and Order of Kutuzov Dive Bombing

Air Regiment) received combat orders of the Red Banner, the Order of Lenin, the Gold Star, and the title of Hero of the Soviet Union from the Soviet Government. During the time of the German crossing of the Berezina River the heroic pilot lost his leg; but worse than that, he lost favor with SMERSH. In some manner, this hero of the Soviet Union made the fatal mistake of getting into an argument with an authorized member of SMERSH. For such unseemly behavior the heroic flier was taken into custody by a group of men connected with SMERSH. Since that time Malik has disappeared just as though he went up in thin air.

#### In Germany

The front was moving toward Berlin. The slogans: "Let us liberate our brothers and sisters," "Kill the Germans," "We will rescue our people, who have fallen victim to the Nazi occupation" were replaced by new slogans.

Major Stepanov, chief of the political section in a certain rifle division made an announcement on the occasion of exercises held by the battalion and regiment while in the province of Brandenburg to the effect that Hitler had prepared 700,000 spies to carry on espionage and diversionists activities in the USSR. These people were to attempt to penetrate into the Soviet Union. All the men were requested to be vigilant in order to uncover all spies and traitors of the native land.

This same Stepanov began to teach a new theory in the political classes to the effect that the victory of Soviet arms over the Hitlerites was made possible thanks to the successes of socialist construction in the USSR, and for that reason alone. Finally, the rumor was circulated around that all the girls (ostorki) had venereal diseases. After such a psychological and political preparation SMERSH proceeded to purge the army.

#### How Was This Carried Out?

Apart from the customary assortment of certificates and documents on each service man in every military unit there is a special file kept by the special section of SMERSH on each officer and man who joins the union. The form was specially developed by SMERSH and was referred to as Form No. 5.

It contained all the data essential and necessary to SMERSH such as: surname, given name, patronymic, date of birth, place of birth, city in which last resided, family status, relations -- children, wife, their ages, and their names.

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A special section was devoted to the following questions: "Have you ever been a German prisoner of war? Have you ever been surrounded? If so, where and when and how long. There was another section concerning punishment and awards as well as disciplinary action taken against the enlisted men or officer.

Hence, SMERSH had detailed information on each man and officer which was systematically checked and supplemented.

But this was not all. The main task of SMERSH was to know the mood of the men and officers in their own particular unit. It was to destroy all enemies of Soviet authority, punish radical thinkers, and shoot down all nonconformers or send them to concentration camps.

To be sure, the officers and men of the Soviet Army had learned, on the basis of bitter experience, to conceal their inimical attitude and opposition or dissatisfaction from the eyes and ears not only of SMERSH, but also from the officials in the army connected with the political apparatus.

I have already mentioned how a net of informers was organized in my description of the Gorokhovetsky camps in the above. However, following the downfall of Hitler and Germany it was difficult to get volunteers to join the seksot. It was easier with some of the Communists and members of the Komsomol. These people were usually told that it was necessary to carry out the task set forth by the party and Comrade Stalin namely, to expose all traitors, spies, and diversionists, of our native land. However he might object, it was difficult for the communist party member to refuse to carry out an assignment of the party and the government. But there was a great number of non-party enlisted personnel and junior officers who lived under the most difficult material conditions of life because of the meager army pay. During the war years the enlisted man received 8.50 rubles and the corporal -- 10 rubles. Naturally, this mass of people felt discriminated against and were most dissatisfied with "socialist" conditions not only in the army but throughout the land. I also wish to remind the reader that there was a great difference in pay between the soldier and the officer; for instance, the enlisted man got 8.50 rubles while the junior lieutenant, a platoon commander, received 600 rubles. The same was true with regard to the food situation, and in the kind of clothing issued. The enlisted man in the Soviet Army was not much better than an animal -- he was

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nothing but canned fodder receiving the most miserable and dreary type food of very low quality. In the army there were 13 different categories (soldiers, of 1st senior officers, the higher officers, workers of intelligence divisions, SMERSH, diversionists, spies, etc.).

Under these conditions it was difficult to find volunteers and idealistic seksots among soldiers and ~~xxxxxx~~ sergeants. To be sure, under the pressure of threats and through promises of remuneration a small portion joined the seksots, but there were very few of them. New means were sought to recruit candidates. For example, SMERSH learned about certain soldiers or commanders who had committed a relatively minor offense usually punishable by arrest, confinement to guardhouse or discharge from the army (this included such things as being drunk at night and spending several hours with a girl, flinging down a newspaper in a fit of temper, cursing out avid writers who praised enthusiastically the kolkhoz workers' life or told of a successful harvest, or failing to carry out the orders of the commander). After picking out the next victim for recruitment as a seksot SMERSH commenced with its work.

The case involving the man who committed a crime went up to SMERSH. At the very outset the "wretched criminal" sense that some serious difficulty was besieging him and felt that the future was filled with dark forebodings. The fact that the matter is that the SMERSH investigator usually classified a simple case of absent without leave as a case of transmitting secret information to the agents of foreign governments; and courting young ladies was regarded as contact with agent spies of foreign intelligence. Any dissatisfaction one might have manifested with a newspaper article, or with certain existing conditions were regarded as counter-revolutionary detrimental activities to the army. All accusations were accompanied by threats and demands to sign a frank admission (which had been fabricated by SMERSH) the victim was subjected to beatings, confinements in the guardhouse and incarceration in prison. Very few people can withstand all this. The victim feels like a rabbit who has been caught in a trap, or like an insignificant worm under the heel of the all-powerful SMERSH. Who can come to his aid? Who is there to know why the victim is subjected to beatings. Every enlisted man and officer remembers full well how the NKVD, the MVD, and SMERSH tried and exiled or

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killed thousands of illustrious commanders of high rank (including Marshall) without trial or a decent hearing. The unhappy transgressor is forced to submit in the long run. On the table he will find a block of white paper on which the following will be inscribed: "I ----, obligate myself to inform the special division of SMERSH immediately of any instances of counter revolution, espionage, and work of a detrimental measure in the unit. I realize that in the event this information is disseminated I shall be held strictly accountable and subject of punishment."

Occasionally the task of processing a new seksot lasted more than a month. For example, in the case of the 62nd Guard Regiment, 19th Mechanized Guard Division Commander, Major General Ermakov, chief of SMERSH of regiment, Captain Kriuchkov) a soldier messenger of the commander of an artillery battalion Captain Krzentsov, was killed by the Germans. As was the custom, the messenger had been quartered in the same house occupied by the artillery battalion commander and was directly subordinate to him. The soldier disappeared, and unfortunately the battalion commander was on leave. It was important to find the guilty person. Any attempt by a service man to desert his unit in the Soviet Union would be reason for the authorities to punish or arrest those people who knew him well in the past; even his superiors might be arrested.

The chief of staff ordered the battalion sergeant to find the missing soldier and threatened him with arrest. The sergeant, quoting disciplinary regulations, gave a reasonable reply to the effect that he could not answer for the battalion's commander's messenger, inasmuch as the latter was quartered at the home of the commander and was directly subordinate to him. Two days later the sergeant was arrested. SMERSH accused him of knowing the intentions of the messenger, of having had contact with him, and of having helped him to desert to the West; and they made other similar accusations. No proof that the sergeant brought forth was accepted. Two weeks passed by. Then, the body of the unhappy messenger was found; he had been killed in a fight with some Germans. But SMERSH did not say a word about this.

They continued to beat and interrogate the sergeant for a whole month as though nothing had happened. On the following month SMERSH finished its work with the sergeant. The latter agreed to work as an informer and seksot; on that very day

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he was ordered back to his unit where he took up his former duty.

As a credit to the sergeant we can say that the old fighter refused to betray his comrades. Shortly after, SMERSH sent the sergeant back to the USSR. But none of his very close friends ever received even the slightest bit of news from him. It is to be assumed that Captain Kruichkov, Chief of SMERSH, finished off the intractable sergeant.

How many seksots were there in the regiment? It is difficult to give an exact answer to that. In my opinion it is safe to say that SMERSH had one seksot for every 10 men or 12.

As proof of this we can cite the following fact. Frequently the men of a squad which had been assigned kitchen police duty (general work in the kitchen, peeling potatoes, etc.) made a mutual agreement amongst themselves to permit one of the men to take off three or four hours for himself in order to go to the city. Usually, an individual taking time off like this had a Russian girl friend in the city; in Germany, he most usually had a German girl. The men sympathized with and understood the inner motives which compelled their comrade to tear himself away for a few hours to be with his loved one. Naturally, realizing that the authorities would not pat them on the head for such action the enlisted men held the matter as an affair. But regardless how well they preserved secrecy the affair was invariably discovered on the following day by SMERSH.

In the morning Kruichkov, Chief of SMERSH, took a walk among the men of the regiment and with benign look would then ask the squad leader: "How is everything with you, sergeant? What's new? Don't you know, sergeant, who absented himself without leave last night to go to the city instead of being on duty in the kitchen?"

Immediately it occurred to the sergeant that was a betrayer in the army crowd but it was too late to retreat. Straightening up before the captain the sergeant saluted and with an innocent mien answered: "That can not be Captain, all the men were present and all will swear to it." Kruichkov replied: "Well let's make a check." The men corroborated the remarks made by the sergeant. It was very inconvenient for SMERSH to expose their own seksot and thus lose him for future needs.



Captain Kriuchkov, Chief of SMERSH, 62nd Guard Regiment

Healthy, dark haired, taller than average, with a protruding belly, Kriuchkov would pass for a middle class land-owner if he wore civilian clothing instead of a neat fitting army uniform without medals and awards.

There was not a little of sorrow and laughter in the barracks following the heart-to-heart talks Kriuchkov had with the new enlisted men who had just entered the unit.

Kriuchkov never forgot to contact the new recruits. Shortly after a new man reported at the battery, squad, or platoon, Captain Kriuchkov also showed up. After the usual questions, Kriuchkov requested that the be shown where the new men were engaged. On finding one of these he would suggest that the recruit take a walk with him. The new man, not yet knowing the identity of this officer, and assuming that he is the senior commander of the unit feels flattered; he proceeds to divulge all his inner thoughts to the captain. The new man, completely won over by the calm, friendly, and fatherly tone of such a good and simple officer opened up his very soul to him. After a cordial exchange of greetings with the soldier Kriuchkov continued further on his way. That evening the enlisted man told with great animation what fine and responsive fellow this captain was who wore the uniform of an artillery officer. The old soldiers laughed heartily and finally told the recruit that he had been talking with the Chief of SMERSH. The soldier said: "You are indeed a lucky fellow; now that the chief of SMERSH has taken an interest in you, you will never go astray."

On this explanation the recruit lost his enthusiasm. He became reticent and paled somewhat as he tried with difficulty to recall his conversation with the good captain. Did he say anything out of place? Kriuchkov continued to visit the various elements in the regiment, he walked about leisurely or travelled in a car.

Post War Purges in the Army

Headquarters of the 19th Guard Mechanized Division were in the City of Trosser. More than 80 men were purged from the 62nd Regiment in November, 1946. Where did these people go? What was their fate? Nobody knows. As a rule, SMERSH never makes any announcements; it keeps such facts as careful secrets.



July 1947. More than 250 men were to be expelled from the division quite unexpectedly; of that number 70 belonged to the 62nd Guard Regiment.

Inasmuch as these unreliable personnel were accompanied by line units of the division who acted as their escorts the latter would be able to tell about their fate.

All the units in the division were ordered to prepare all documents regarding those persons who were subject to release and demobilization from the division (according to a list prepared by SMERSH, naturally).

After drawing up all the documents and issuing the usual certificates like those given to service men, the non-reliables and suspected personnel were placed under the control of a convoy of troops. None of them knew why they were being taken away, nor where they were going. They travelled without their weapons, and had only their military uniform with their medals and ribbons.

In Brest-Litovsk the men were placed in railroad cars. Leaving that point they arrived at the City of Kalinin. In Kalinin they detrained and travelled on foot to a silk factory which had been removed from Germany. It seemed that SMERSH had prepared a comfortable place for the men, 60 percent of whom wore decorations.

This was an MVD camp surrounded by barbed wire and with grill work on the windows. There were search lights on towers and numerous sentries armed with automatic weapons were about.

The men from the Guard Regiment were not the first to arrive there; the camp already had 2,500 men in it. All these men were working at the silk combine. They commenced work at 6 o'clock in the morning and returned at 7 or 8 at night. They slept on wide boards three tiers high.

They convicted men, despite the fact that they wore decorations, knew that henceforth they were to be the slaves of the MVD and SMERSH. They lost their last hope of getting some kind of justice and law.

After a week the division troop convoy returned. The men of the convoy were silent; when they spoke about the fate of their comrades they spoke sullenly.